critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T.M. Kraus

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This Week

Jose Ferrer made plans to return to NY as star, director and co-producer of Edwin Booth, a new biographical play on the famous actor covering the final 40 years of his life. Co-sponsored by the Playwrights Company, the 7 character play by Milton Geiger is set to open Dec 8 after a cross-country tour starting in Oct and including Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago. A film version is also planned.

Plays

First Broadway play of season will be Howie, a comedy by Phoebe Ephron with Leon Ames, due Sept 17 at Coronet... London musical hit La Plume de ma Tante with original French company to be presented Nov 3 at Royale by David Merrick-Joseph Kipness... When The Eagle Spreads His Wings by Frank Corsaro to star Shelley Winters... Eddie Dowling plans to present 3 plays next season starting with the musical comedy Shantytown, also a comedy melodrama Starward Ark and a comedy The Can Opener... Musical version of Captain Applejack set for Jan by Jonathan Edwards-Halroy Productions.

Players

France Nuyen to play title role of The World of Suzie Wong due in late Oct at Broadhurst ... Muriel Bentley replaces Carmen Alvarez, West Side Story... Margaret Hamilton, Nathaniel Frey join Goldilocks... Jane Romano, Nightcap revue at Showplace, signed for A Swim in the Sea.. Pat Hingle signed for lead in J.B... Harold Brighouse, 75, author of Hobson's Choice died in London.

Playhouses

The Majestic Theatre has a new $10,000 electric marquee honoring the success of current tenant The Music Man.

Tickets

Senate Finance Committee okayed removing 10% admission tax from the first $1 on the price of tickets. If Congress approves change the tax on a $3 ticket would apply only to $2 of the total. For the ticket buyer, the ducat would then cost $3.20 instead of $3.30.

Calendar

In Color on Sundays-Jan Hus-351 E 74 7/29. Jerry Bleyer presents new comedy by Michael Lewis Stern, staged by Wayne Brown, with Christina Crawford... Waiting for Godot -York -1st & 64 8/5. Actors Workshop of San Francisco production of Beckett play prior to Brussels Fair... Twelfth Night- Central Park 8/6. Second program of summer season of NY Shakespeare Festival, directed by Joseph Papp ...Auntie Mame-City Center 8/11. Sylvia Sidney starring for 3 week run.

Theatre TV Notes

Roberta planned by Bob Hope for one of his NBC TV shows...NBC may also present Lend an Ear this season... Time of Your Life with Jackie Gleason to be presented on CBS Playhouse 90 Oct 9.

Theatre Film Notes

MGM bought screen rights to Tennessee Williams' Sweet Bird of Youth... John Huston to film Lysistrata... Title of Danny Kaye film version of Jacobowsky and the Colonel, switched back to "Me and the Colonel ...3 Penny Opera to be filmed in Germany next year with Curt Jurgens... Otto Preminger replaced Rouben Mamoulian as director of Samuel Goldwyn's film of Porgy andBess.

Theatre Music Notes

Kurt Weill Concert at Lewisohn Stadium July 31 features Lotte Lenya, Scott Merrill, Charlotte Rae... Pop Concerts planned for NY Coliseum Aug 7 -Sept 7 canceled due to illness of musical director D'Artega.

Children's Theatre

Dame Wiggin's Dilemma, a traditional English pantomime, to be presented by Magda Productions at York Playhouse, 1st & 64, afternoons starting Aug 14.

Other Broadways

Richard Arlen to star in Australian tour of Anniversary Waltz... Marriage-Go-Round to skip planned Denver stop due to scenery problems.

Off Broadway

Maxwell Anderson's The Golden Six to be presented by Warner LeRoy-Norman Twain Oct 13 at York Playhouse, LeRoy directing. Play has cast of 35 and concerns the grandsons of Roman Emperor Augustus. It was presented April 30 at Boston University.

Flahooley, 1951 musical, to be presented Off Broadway this fall by Sidney Bernstein ... Chaparral, a new play by Valgene Massey to be presented Sept 9 at Sheridan Sq Theatre by Gene Wolsk-Robert Livingston... The Crucible presenting $2 "bargain matinees" Thursdays at Martinque Theatre... Vantage Theatre, Bayside, to open in Sept as year-round Off Broadway Theatre.

Summer Playhouses

Oh Captain NY production to be presented at Wallingford, Conn and Warwick, RI, in Sept... Li'l Abner summer tent production which played at Westbury, NY, Camden, NJ, to start nationwide tour Sept 29 at Shakespeare Festival Theatre Stratford, Conn... Shirley Booth canceled appearance in The Deep Blue Sea at Dennis, Mass. due to illness.

Yiddish Theatre

Maurice Schwartz to appear in Yiddish version of A Hole in the Head opening Nov 25 at Anderson Theatre, 2nd Ave & 4th St.

London

Old Vic fall program to include Schiller's Mary Stuart with Irene Worth, Norman Ginsbury's adaptation of Ghosts with Flora Robson, Julius Caesar and Macbeth... Jose Quintero left for London to stage Long Day's Journey Into Night with Anthony Quayle and Gwen-Ffrangcon-Davies, opening Sept 15 at Globe, after a week at Edinburgh Festival.

College Theatre

Samuel Selden, head of drama dept of University of North Carolina and founder of the "Carolina Playmakers", will become chairman of the Dept of Theatre Arts of the Univ. of California at Los Angeles Jan 1. He staged The Confederacy outdoor drama at Virginia Beach, Va.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Porgy and Bess-Westbury, NY- revival with the cast which toured around the world is superlative raves Coleman, Mirror. It's beautifully sung, acted and stepped, It has style, pace and excitement, ensemble acting and singing of a high order, all adding up to a reasonable definition of perfect. Andrew Frierson, as Porgy, brings a rich baritone voice and miming from the heart. Martha Flowers, who subbed for Urylee Leonardos as Bess, was also applauded.

The Rose Tattoo- Fort Lee, NJ- revival with Viveca Lindfors enjoyed by Herridge, Post. Lindfors' fans would hardly recognize her, for she has turned her gracious beauty into the hysterical, superstitious, sensual slattern of the play. Though her voice and gestures are a bit overwrought in the first scene, she soon has the fireworks under control. Director George Keathly was credited with staging play with an all-out vitality suitable.

STRATFORD ONTARIO SEASON

The Winter's Tale- Ontario 7/21. Atkinson, Times, generally approved the Canadian company's production, but thought the Connecticut performance of the same play, that he had viewed the previous evening, was the better of the two because it better captures the wayward, fanciful spirit of the play. Whittaker, Herald Tribune, rated entry highly, noting that once the confusion of the opening scene settles down, it will glow forth ever more richly. Eileen Herlie, Charmion King, Frances Hyland and Jason Robards, Jr. head cast directed by Douglas Campbell. Times critic feared that those unfamiliar with the plot may have difficulty discovering what is happening due to the bad speech practices of almost all of the cast with the exception of Herlie.

NEW MEXICO OUTDOOR OPERA

Wuthering Heights- Sante Fe, N.M. production of Carlisle Floyd's new opera based on Bronte's classic rated as first rate theatre by Watts, News, and Levy, Herald Tribune. Presented by the Sante Fe Opera Company at a small outdoor theatre the stage seemed too small for the work, noticed News music reviewer. But given the proper facilities, such as it will have when presented later at the City Center, it remains an absorbing show and an exciting affair. Herald Tribune reviewer billed it as an exciting stage piece, often moving and powerful. He thought it more a drama with music than an opera.

NY CRITIC IN SWEDEN

Midsummer's Night Dream is sole drama running currently in Stockholm, reports Watts, Post. Presented in a beautiful open-air setting, the production turns Oberon's minions into sinister trolls out of Scandinavian folklore and the comic tradesmen into drunken gnomes. A wonderfully wild and eerie effect is achieved.

HITS REVISITED

Look Back in Anger with an almost complete new cast remains interesting and provocative but does not seem to hold up too well as a play, reports Kobe, Variety. The values of the play have been changed, as often happens in cases of multiple recasting. Donald Madden as Jimmy Porter is no longer quite the dominating character he was with Kenneth Haigh's kinetic portrayal. Susan Olivier as the wife lacks quite the scope of Mary Ure, but for a newcomer presents a promising performance and impresses as a potential personality.

FORD FUND GRANTS

Ford Foundation has set up 20 individual grants for out-of-town theatre directors and for new playwrights. 10 directors to be chosen will be given $10,000 each as a "creative fund" to be spent by Jan 1, 1960. The money is to be used to secure talented actors or other assistance in the production of plays he could not risk under normal circumstances, to study and travel in a program designed to broaden his professional experience, to permit a director to work outside his present location, etc.

10 playwrights will get partial subsidies to the 10 out-of-town theatres that present their new plays. In addition to money to stage the production, the playwright will recieve royalties and travel and living expenses during the production period.

Groups participating include--Actor's Workshop of San Francisco, Department of Speech and Drama of Stanford University, Arena Stage of Washington, D. C., Division of Theatre Arts of Boston University, Omaha Community Playhouse, Tulsa Little Theatre, Department of Drama of Carnegie Institute of Technology, Dallas' Margo Jones Theatre '58, Playhouse of Erie, Penn., Houston's Alley Theatre. Playwrights who have written at least two full length plays can seek nomination by submitting a script to New Dramatists Committee, 130 W 56, NYC 19.

LONDON STAGE VIEWS

The theatre has been far too complacent, very little has been done to improve theatre buildings or productions, even with the competition of films and television at the gates, states "Stage" editorial. Managers have been sitting back and hoping people would still come in. 50 years ago such a policy might have been pursued with success. Gramaphones, radio sets, talking films and television have revolutionised the face of the entertainment industry beyond all recognition, but many managers are still putting on the same dreary, moth-eaten shows week after week, year after year and express surprise when business is bad, points out British trade paper.

Small wonder so many provincial and London suburban variety theatres have had to close their doors. They refused to move with the times, and though one regrets to see these old theatres disappearing at such an alarming rate, one has to admit that in many instances the managements have asked for it. Why should the public be expected to pay good money night after night to see trashy shows which are an insult to their intelligence and good taste?

STRAW HAT CALENDAR

Current summer presentations of interest include---

NY--The Prisoner at Albany... The Precious Ladies at Chestertown... Compulsion at Woodstock.

NJ--Anastasia at Cape May... Light Up Sky at Princeton... Auntie Mame with Sylvia Sidney at Lambertville.

GREEN ROOM DEPARTMENT

JONES BEACH SAGA... 4 more editorials saluting Song of Norway at Jones Beach filed, bringing total of 6 within recent weeks. Show is in keeping with the high standard that has marked the outdoor theatre's short history, notes Times editorial. Marine Theatre seems to have reached an artistic pinnacle this season, justifying the foresight and artistic judgement of Park Commissioner Moses, comments Journal American editorial. Better not miss this magnificent spectacle, recommends News editorial. The theatre has become nearly as big a hot-weather attraction as the beach itself, a summer festival fiture, World Telegram-Sun editorial hopes goes on and on.

COLUMN TIPS... Broadwayites shaking their heads in disbelief over the financial fiasco of Oh Captain, which reportedly came to town with a $500,000 advance and then closed to a $400,000 loss, repeats Farrell, World Telegram-Sun... My Fair Lady London producers looking for replacement for Rex Harrison, suffering from lar - yngitis, hears Mortimer, Mirror... Li'l Abner opening in Las Vegas Sept 1 may spice up with a few nudes, reports McHarry, News... Paul Muni may not come east with At The Grand, whispers Hopper, News.

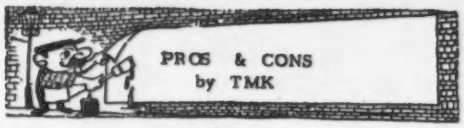
DRAMA MAIL BOX... Broadway directors for years have designed charmingly executed curtain calls that add an extra measure of delight to the play, reminds press agent Michael Mok.

FAIR REPORTS... Watts, Post, was sad to see the beautiful and well-equiped playhouse at the US exhibit at the Brussels Fair empty. He wished the theatre could be transported intact to NY. Cameron, News, believes shows at theatre had limited audiences due to fact that visitors had too hectic a schedule to allot a full evening to just one entertainment.

INVESTMENT TIP... Backing shows requires know how and luck, advises Coleman, Mirror. To do well the investor must keep charts on producers, just as if they were gambling on horses. Back the tops and hope. It's not always easy to put your money on a hit producer, for there are no pari-matuel windows, and the click boys usually have waiting lists. So the only thing to do is send along your check, which may be returned, and trust that one of the steady backers has left an open spot for you.

SECOND GUESSES... If you feel like a wild evening in Greenich Village, McHarry, News, suggests the silly Ionesco twin bill at the Sullivan St. Playhouse. He hated every minute of his two hour stay but remained because he was horribly fascinated.... Eleanor Roosevelt, Post, recommends Look Homeward Angel as one of the best plays she has ever seen. Every audience will go away with a sense of satisfaction.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Ralph Bellamy, Sunrise at Campobello, wants to continue in the role of FDR for two years, including a tour of Washington and London and then a film, he told Herridge, Post. He did not mind the thought of two years in the same role because it is the first play he has been in with no dull spots. For the very far future he has a plan of a project with Laurence Olivier... Two months of collecting "Theatre Stamps" at a grocery can lead to a balcony seat to My Fair Lady, Ladislas Farago, originator of "Theatre Stamps" told Battelle, Journal American. At present 104 independent stores handle the stamps, but eventually they will be handled at supermarkets, gas stations, etc. Marionette shows, circuses and baseball tickets are also to be included in the plan presented by Theatre Corporation of America.



Porgy and Bess at Westbury, NY is a superb arena production of the exciting and beautiful modern American classic performed by the company justly hailed throughout the world on its recent tour. Every cast member knows exactly what he is doing every moment. The voices perfect, the acting humorous, tender, romantic in turn. The only minor note is the slowing of the proceedings during the scene changes, but the lost time and pace is quickly picked up by the experienced pros. Every effort possible should be made to see this production, for it will be 6 years before another live presentation is allowed.

* *

The Ford Foundation, which has quietly been aiding US education for years, turned its attention and money to the arts. Rightly so, the theatre arts were not forgotten. The plan to give 20 grants to out-of-town theatres and playwrights is a giant step forward. Arguments, pro and con, on federal and private subsidies for theatre have in the past proved academic for the simple reason that no money for any plan was available. Now a plan has been set in motion and the results will be apparent to all by Jan 1, 1960. It is hoped that the money will be used wisely to foster good theatre in general, and not to aid particular friends of those concerned.

* *

From Shakespeare to Li'l Abner, that is the range that theatre-goers at Stratford, Conn. Shakespeare Theatre will be able to view in Sept, thanks to the booking of the summer tent production of the musical comedy. This is the first attempt at booking a tour of a successful summer tent production. The twin turnabout bookings of the summer production of Auntie Mame into the NY City Center and of the summer tent production of Li'l Abner are credits to the to the imagination of the growing tent operations and their importance in the over-all theatre picture. If both productions are successful, theatre-goers in general will benefit and the chances of employment for hundreds of actors will multiply.

* *

6 editorials within a 10 day period were devoted to praise for Song of Norway production at Jones Beach Marine Theatre and the role Park Commissioner Robert Moses played in making the outdoor spectacle possible. Only the Post has so far failed to devote editorial page space to the project. Interesting is fact that only one editorial writer shared praise with producer Guy Lombardo. Even more interesting is fact that not one of these papers has ever devoted an editorial to the fiasco of the Central Park musicals, alsd under the jurisdiction of Moses.

* *

Off Broadway has expanded to Queens. The first professional group has announced a year-round plan with Equity casts. Their base will be in Bayside and the devoted Off Broadway fan can start learning his way about Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx, and maybe even Staten Island. NY critics who this week ventured to Sante Fe, Stockholm and Stratford, Ontario, can hardly put geographical limits on "Off Broadway."

* *

Curtain calls are an important and enjoyable part of theatre-going and certainly worth the time and energy directors might spend in designing interesting calls. But bad mannered theatre-goers rushing up the aisles at the drop of the final curtain hinder their full contemplation by an otherwise appreciative audience. The entire theatre evening should be one of relaxation, up to and including the final curtain call.

July 28,1958 THEATRE FACT CHART- CRITICAL DIGEST-139 E 47,NYC--EL 5-6894

This weekly chart of CRITICAL DIGEST- presents up-to-date data on current business and critical reaction to current Broadway and Off Broadway shows. Subscribers may phone, write, or call in person for any other specific data or for late reviews.

"C"- Critical- figures refer to percentage of PRO reviews filed by NYC daily reviewers. PRO means show was recommended for entertaining and/or stimulating evening, not if the critic predicted if show would be a commercial hit or not.

"B"- Business- figures refer to percentage of gross ticket sales last week. %% B Figures refer to percentage of past week's attendance and indicates current availability of tickets. CAP figures refer to gross capacity of house in thousands of dollars. Figures that follow are gross estimates by Variety for past week and previous week, all figures are in thousands of dollars. Thus 100% B- Cap$68--$68-$64, etc- means that the past week the show was a sell out, the previous week gross was $64,000, etc.

BELLS ARE RINGING Shubert $7.50	230 W 44 CI 6-5990	80% C- Show 2 Con-WTS, Times-100% Judy RE OPENS AUG 11
DARK TOP STAIRS Music Box $6.90	238 W 45 CI 6-4636	80% C- 1 Con-WTS- 3 raves Inge's best 50% B- Cap $33--$16 $17 $18 $27 $32 $32
JAMAICA Imperial $8.35	256 W 45 CO 5-2412	40% C- Show 3 Pro- Times, J. Am, Post RE OPENS AUG 11
LOOK BACK ANGER Golden $5.75	250 W 45 CI 6-6745	80% C- 2 Con- WTS, Mirror 40% B- Cap $25--$13 $12 $12 $15 $16 $12 $10
LOOK HOMEWARD Barrymore $6.90	243 W 47 CI 6-0390	100% C- raves for cast, play, Wolfe, etc 70% B- Cap $40--$23 $28 $28 $41 $41 $41 $41
MUSIC MAN Majestic $8.05	245 W 45 CI 6-0730	100% C- 6 pro raves show-H. Trib milder 100% B- Cap $68--$69 $69 $69 $69 $69 $69
MY FAIR LADY Hellinger $8.05	1655 Bway PL 7-7064	100% C- 7 raves - 4 okay new leads 100% B- Cap $68--$69 $69 $69 $69 $69 $69
ROMANOFF-JULIET Plymouth $5.25	236 W 45 CI 6-9156	30% C- 2 Pro-News, Post- T. Poston new lead 50% B- Cap $36--$17 $15 $15 $26 $24 $24 $24
SAY DARLING ANTA $7.50	245 W 52 CI 6-6270	90% C- 1 Con- Times- 5 raves for show 90% B- Cap $50--$44 $34 $25 $39 $44 $44
SUNRISE CAMPOBELLO Cort $6.90	138 W 48 CI 5-5289	100% C- raves for R. Bellamy & play 100% B- Cap $37--$36 $37 $34 $37 $37 $37
TWO SEE SAW Booth $6.90	222 W 45 CI 6-5969	80% C-1 Con- WTS- 5 raves cast, script 95% B- Cap $31--$28 $31 $28 $32 $32 $32
VISIT Morosco $6.90	217 W 45	80% C- 2 Con- Mirror, J. Am RE OPENS Aug 20
WEST SIDE STORY W. Garden $7.50	1634 Bway CI 5-4878	100% C- 7 pros for musical: dances, etc 65% B- Cap $63--$40 $40 $37$48 $52 $53
WHO WAS LADY Beck $6.90	305 W 45 CI 6-6363	80% C_ 2 Con- Times, Post 40% B- Cap $47--$20 $19 $16 $24 $29 $30

" TV THEATRE PROGRAMS "

Sept 22- CBS- Harvey on DuPont Show of Month
Oct 9- CBS- Time of Your Life on Playhouse 90 with Jackie Gleason
Oct 13- NBC- Johnny Belinda- with Juliet Harris on Hall of Fame
Oct 16- CBS- Little Women-musical by Richard Adler-Ronald Alexander
--Oct-CBS- Face of A Hero- on Playhouse 90- prior to stage
Nov 20- NBC- Kiss Me Kate on Hall of Fame
Nov 30- CBS- Wonderful Town with Rosalind Russell after 3 week tour
Dec 9- CBS- Gift of Magi- musical by Richard Adler-Ronald Alexander

Mar 23- NBC- Green Pastures with William Warfield on Hall of Fame
Apr 28- NBC- Ah Wilderness- on Hall of Fme
-- '59- CBS- Hamlet- Old Vic production on Dupont Show of Month

" OFF BROADWAY "

BALD SOPRANO Sullivan $3.50	181 Sullivan OR 4-3838	2 Pro-H. Tribune, News 4 Con- Times, Post, J. Am, WTS
BLOOD WEDDING Actors Play $3.45	100-7th Av S. OR 5-1036	3 Pro-Times, Post, J. Am. 1 Con- WTS
BOY FRIEND Cherry Lane $4.60	31 Commerce CH 2-4468	5 Pro- Times, Trib, J. Am, WTS, Post
CHILDREN DARKNESS Circle $4.50	5 Sher Sq. OR 5-9437	6 Pro 1 Con- News
COMIC STRIP Barb. Plaza $3.90	100 C. Park S. CI 7-1143	6 Pro-Times, Trib, Mir WTS, J. Am, Post
CRUCIBLE Martinque $4.15	32 & Bway PE 6-3056	7 Pro- Unanimous raves revival Miller play
GUEST OF NATION T. Marquee $3.20	110 E 59 PL 3-2575	4 Pro- Times, Trib, J. Am, Post
PLAYBOY W. WORLD Tara $3.95	120 Madison MU 6 - 4950	7 Pro-Unanimous approval revival Synge comedy
3 PENNY OPERA De Lys $4.85	121 Chris. WA 4-8782	3 Pro- Times, Trib, Post
ULYSSES NIGHTTOWN Rooftop $4.60	2nd & Hous. AL 4-5475	4 Pro-Times, Trib, J. Am, Post 3 Con- News, Mir, WTS

" LONDON CALENDAR "

July -- Noon Has No Shadows- Arts
July 26- Dear Augustine- Royal Court
Sept2 - Auntie Mame- Adelphi
Sept 17- Mary Stuart- Old Vic

" CD PROS & CONS "

PROS: Look Homeward Angel, Music Man, My Fair Lady, Romanoff & Juliet
Sunrise Campobello, Two See Saw, Visit, Who Was Lady

Bald Soprano, Blood Wedding, Boy Friend, Children Darkness, Comic Strip, Playboy Western World

CONS: Ulysses in Nighttown

" THEATRE CALENDAR "

In Color On Sundays-Jan Hus 7/29
Waiting for Godot- York 8/5
Twelfth Night- Cent Park 8/6
Hedda- Provincetown-8/6
Auntie Mame- City Center 8/11

Young Provincials-Cricket 9/8
Jacknife- Royal 9/9
Chaparral-Sheridan Sq 9/9
Paul Curtis Mime- 9/15
Howie- Coronet 9/17
Streetcar Named Desire-Carn. Play 9/17
Shield for Medusa-Sullivan St 9/23
At The Grand-46th St 9/25
Swim in Sea- Lyceum 9/30

Handful of Fire-Morosco 10/1
Touch of Poet-Hayes 10/2
Legend of Lizzie-10/6
Time of Cuckoo- 10/6
Drink to Me Only 10/8
Goldilocks-Lunt 10/9
Capt. Brassbound Conversion-St Paul 10/10
Golden Six- York 10/13
Crazy Old Owl-10/13
Theatre National Paris-Broadway 10/14
Girls in 509-Belasco 10/15
Old Friends- Miller 10/16
Epitaph George Dillon -Golden 10/20
Man Who Never Died-J n Hus 10/21
Pleasure of His Company-Longacre 10/22
Once More With Feeling-National 10/22
Loving Couple- 10/22
Night Circus-10/23

Marriage Go Round-Plymouth 10/29
Man in Dog Suit- Coronet 10/30

World Suzie Wong-Broadhurst 10/?
Balcony- De Lys 10/?
Ole-Greenwich Mews- 10/?
Montage- Gate 10/?
Shadow of Cucman. -Bijou 10/?

La Plume De Ma Tante-Royale 11/3
Tall Story- 11/5
Comes A Day- 11/6
Salad Days- Barbizon 11/11
Flower Drum Song-St James 11/20
Gazebo- 11/26

Disenchanted- 12/3
Cold Wind & Warm-Morosco 12/4
Old Vic-Broadway- 12/9
Edwin Booth- 12/?
Whoop- Up- Shubert 12/16
Arthur Miller play- 12/18

Pride and Prejudice- 1/?
Juno- 1/29

This weekly NYC THEATRE NEWSLETTER DIGEST--now in its 10th year of service to "stage struck" theatre fans, producers, drama editors, investors, college libraries, etc--coast to coast--presents 52 weeks per year---

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